

Appl. No. : 10/689,254
Filed : October 20, 2003

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-49. (CANCELLED)

50. (NEW) A retractable vehicle step, comprising:

a step member having a stepping deck and a support bracket portion extending inboard from said stepping deck;

a first support arm; and

a second support arm;

said first support arm and said second support arm connectable with respect to an underside of a vehicle so as to be pivotable about a first pivot axis and a second pivot axis, respectively;

said first support arm and said second support arm connected to said step member so that said first support arm and said second support arm are pivotable with respect to said step member about a third pivot axis and a fourth pivot axis, respectively, said fourth pivot axis located inboard from said third pivot axis;

said first support arm and said second support arm allowing said step member to move between a retracted position and a deployed position downward and outboard from said retracted position;

said first support arm and said second support arm extending downward and outboard from said first and second pivot axes, respectively, when said step member is in said retracted position;

wherein said stepping deck is substantially wider than said support bracket portion;

wherein said support bracket portion provides a recessed area into which said first support arm is inserted at said third pivot axis.

51. (NEW) The retractable vehicle step of Claim 50, wherein said support bracket portion provides an opening in an upper surface of said support bracket portion into which opening said first support arm is inserted at said third pivot axis.

52. (NEW) The retractable vehicle step of Claim 51, wherein:

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said first support arm comprises a unitary support arm defining an inboard surface and an outboard surface, a maximum distance between said inboard surface and said outboard surface defining a first thickness, said first support arm defining a substantially vertical first side and a substantially vertical second side, a maximum distance between said first side and said second side defining a first width, said first width being substantially greater than said first thickness.

53. (NEW)The retractable vehicle step of Claim 52, wherein:

said second support arm comprises a unitary support arm defining an inboard surface and an outboard surface, a maximum distance between said inboard surface and said outboard surface defining a second thickness, said second support arm defining a substantially vertical first side and a substantially vertical second side, a maximum distance between said first side and said second side defining a second width, said second width being substantially greater than said second thickness.

54. (NEW)The retractable vehicle step of Claim 51, wherein said upper surface of said support bracket portion extends outboard of said third pivot axis.

55. (NEW)The retractable vehicle step of Claim 54, wherein said support bracket portion further comprises a lower surface opposite said upper surface.

56. (NEW)The retractable vehicle step of Claim 55, wherein said lower surface of said support bracket portion extends outboard of said third pivot axis.

57. (NEW)The retractable vehicle step of Claim 51, wherein said second support arm is inserted into said opening at said fourth pivot axis.

58. (NEW)The retractable vehicle step of Claim 51, wherein said support bracket portion comprises a first side segment and a second side segment located on opposite sides of said opening, wherein said first side segment and said second side segment comprise a unitary member.

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59. (NEW) The retractable vehicle step of Claim 50, wherein at least one of said first support arm and said second support arm further comprises a first end which forms at least two spaced-apart coaxial bearing members suitable for pivotable connection with respect to said underside of said vehicle.

60. (NEW) The step assist of Claim 59, wherein said at least one of said first support arm and said second support arm further comprises a second end which forms at least two spaced-apart coaxial bearing members pivotably connected to said step member.